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FLOOR DEBATE

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hear from me. I was elected and sent here to this Chamber, and whenever it's open I'm entitled to be here. But trying to show some degree of courtesy and accommodation for you all, I stay out of the Chamber when you bring your...your incantation spouters here, and that's what I view them as being. Here is my poem, "Musings on a Too Lengthy Legislative Prayer": Wouldst thou please God when ye pray, do so in the following way. Lord, since all is known to you, words I utter shall be few; for us both this scheme works fine, wasting not thy time nor mine. They're wasting their time. How many of you have ever decided to be more conscientious when they come here? How many of you have ever said, now you're going to follow the practices that the President is telling you you ought to follow, because they stood up there and pontificated and told you that's what you ought to do? How would you all feel if I were to come in here and exercise my prerogative of sitting in the chair? I don't have to be out of here and I don't have to stand up when these people come here doing that. Senator Cudaback, when I was a youngster, by comparison, and came down here, I was caught by surprise. I didn't know they had church before they had the Legislature, to me. So, the guy stood up and they said we're going to have prayer by the chaplain, so, trying to be courteous, I stood up. But I don't bow my head and close my eyes and engage in hypocrisy. So after all the praying and the mumbo jumbo was over, one of the senators came to me and said, Ernie, don't you know that you're supposed to close your eyes when people pray? I say, why is that? They say, well, to show respect, and you were just looking around. I say, well, how could you know I'm looking around if you didn't have your eyes open and you were looking around at me? They don't even realize what they say. All this prayer means nothing. Who are you all trying to impress by it? But since most of the people in here profess to be Christians, they're going to impose their way on everybody. And that's why I am so hostile toward religion. All the talk of compassion, tolerance, consideration, but when you're in the majority you impose your way on everybody, and if they don't accept it something is wrong with them. Keep it out of here. Jesus took that coin and said, give to Caesar what's Caesar, give to God what's God. If you want to talk to God and talk about God, go to church. Go to church before you come here. And I hope you go to a different church than you've been